

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1118
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 BRUSSELS 08955

USEEC
PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY
PARIS ALSO FOR USOECD
GENEVA ALSO FOR USMTN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, EEC
SUBJ: THE FIRST EXCLUSIVE PRESS INTERVIEW WITH EC
COMMISSIONER FOR AGRICULTURE GUNDELACH

THE JULY 21, 1977 EDITION OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE AGRA
EUROPE CARRIED THE FIRST EXCLUSIVE PRESS INTERVIEW THAT
EC COMMISSIONER GUNDELACH HAS GIVEN SINCE HE ASSUMED
HIS PRESENT RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE FIRST OF JANUARY
THIS YEAR. WE ARE RELIABLY TOLD IT WAS GIVEN AT
GUNDELACH'S PERSONAL REQUEST IN ORDER TO CORRECT SOME
MISUNDERSTANDINGS ON THE PART OF THE STAFF OF THIS
PARTICULAR AGRICULTURAL ORGAN. OUR FREE TRANSLATION OF
THE INTERVIEW, AS IT APPEARED IN THIS PUBLICATION,
FOLLOWS:

BEGIN QUOTE: AGRA EUROPE (AE): ON THE MATTER OF BUTTER
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SALES TO THE SOVIETS, YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN CONVINCING
WITH JOURNALISTS. DO YOU MAINTAIN THAT YOUR ATTITUDE
WAS MERELY DICTATED BY ECONOMIC MOTIVES--RISK OF STOCK
LIQUIDATION--OR DO YOU ADMIT THAT POLITICAL PRESSURES
WERE HIGH?

GUNDELACH (G): I HAVE NEVER SAID THE MOTIVE WAS THE

LEVEL OF STOCKS. IT WAS A BUDGET MATTER. MY COLLEAGUE CHEYSSON HAD GIVEN ASSURANCES TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. A POLITICAL MALAISE THEN AROSE. THE AIM OF MY ACTION WAS TO REMEDY THAT MALAISE, WHICH WAS GENUINE, NOT ONLY IN BRITAIN, BUT ALSO IN THE NETHERLANDS, GERMANY AND DENMARK, AND TO CALM FEELINGS. HOWEVER, I CONTINUED THE SYSTEM OF SUBSIDIES ON SHIPMENTS TO ALL COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THOSE TO EASTERN EUROPE. THIS ACTION WAS IMPERATIVE, EVEN IF ITS LENGTH CAN BE DISCUSSED. THEN NORMALCY RETURNED AND THERE HAVE BEEN NO MARKET LOSSES.

I NEVER ONCE REFUSED THE PREFIXATION OF SUBSIDIES. EVENTUALLY, I WON A DIFFICULT BATTLE.

AE: DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN TAKE UP THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOTH AGRICULTURE AND FISHING, THE LATTER REPORTEDLY TAKING UP 50 PERCENT OF YOUR TIME?

G: IT HAS WORKED SO FAR. SOME MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE ARE ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR FISHING. COMMUNITY FISHING POLICY STARTED WITH ME. IT DOES NOT TAKE UP 50 PERCENT, BUT SOME 15 PERCENT OF MY TIME.

I AM KEEPING THE FILE, FOR THE TIME BEING. WE WILL SEE WHAT HAPPENS LATER. IN ANY CASE, PRIORITY RESTS WITH AGRICULTURE.
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AE: IT WOULD SEEM THAT YOU ARE UNDER HEAVY GERMAN PRESSURE FOR EVERYTHING CONNECTED WITH A REDUCTION IN THE MONETARY COMPENSATORY AMOUNTS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE CASE FOR THE WRITTEN PROCEDURE ON GERMAN CHEESE AND POWDERED MILK, WHICH HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED. WHAT ABOUT IT, AND DO YOU BELIEVE THAT NEGOTIATIONS IN THE CORRIDORS OF THE COUNCIL ARE, FOR YOU, THE BEST WAY TO SETTLE THAT KIND OF PROBLEM?

G: SUCH REACTIONS ON THE PART OF THE GERMANS ON THE PROBLEMS OF MONETARY COMPENSATORY AMOUNTS ARE CLASSICAL. MY PREDECESSOR MR. LARDINOIS HAD MAJOR CLASHES WITH THEM ON THE SUBJECT. FRANCE SUBMITTED A MEMORANDUM ON THE MONETARY COMPENSATORY AMOUNTS DURING THE LAST PRICE NEGOTIATIONS. I PROMISED TO DEAL WITH IT. ON THE PROBLEM AS A WHOLE, THE COUNCIL IS DIVIDED: THE GERMANS WANT NOTHING, OTHERS, SUCH AS BENELUX AND IRELAND, DO NOT WANT TO WEAKEN THE ATTACK BY PARTIAL ADJUSTMENTS, AND FRANCE IS ASKING FOR ADJUSTMENTS. ON THE REDUCTION OF THE MONETARY COMPENSATORY AMOUNTS FOR CHEESE, THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT DID EXPLODE. WHAT CAN BE DONE, UNDER

SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES? THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DECISION
SYSTEM SHOULD NOT BE ABANDONED. BUT IF A MINISTER ASKS
THAT THE MATTER BE DISCUSSED, HE CAN'T BE REFUSED. I
THEREFORE HAVE AGREED TO DISCUSS THIS WITH MESSRS.
MEHAIGNERIE AND ERTL. ON THAT QUESTION OF CHEESE, THE
PRINCIPLE STANDS, AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, BUT A
"MODUS VIVENDI" CAN BE FOUND. EXCEPT FOR EXTRAORDINARY
ISSUES, MATTERS SHOULD NOT BE SETTLED ON THE PERIPHERY
OF THE COUNCIL. SO WE WILL MEET ON JULY 18 REGARDING
MONETARY COMPENSATORY AMOUNTS. ONE SHOULD BE COURTEOUS.

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AE: CAN A COMMISSIONER, IN YOUR OPINION, TAKE A POSITION
ON THE ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF A MINISTER? IF SO,
HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE ATTITUDE OF MR. SILKIN WHO HAS
ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL BE "HARD, PARTIAL, AND EVEN
AGGRESSIVE?"

G: I HAVE SUBMITTED SOME OF MY THOUGHTS TO MR. SILKIN
IN A LETTER THAT DID NOT CONCERN THAT PARTICULAR ISSUE.
HOWEVER, I STAND ON WHAT I WROTE.

A MINISTER ARGUING IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT IS PLAYING THE
GAME. BUT IT IS DIFFERENT WHEN THE MINISTER STATES THAT
HE IS OPPOSED TO UK MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMON MARKET.
WE WILL HAVE MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM IN
THE COMING MONTHS. THE BRITISH MINISTER HAD MADE THE
LAST COUNCILS VERY DIFFICULT. MR. SILKIN OUGHT TO

RESPECT THE EUROPEAN SPIRIT. WHEN I TELL HIM THIS,
HE REPLIES: "NO, I DO NOT WANT THE CAP." MR. OWEN,
THE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY, ALSO HAS GIVEN A VERY
CLEAR WARNING IN A RECENT INTERVIEW. HOW MUCH IMPORTANCE
SHOULD BE GIVEN TO SUCH A STATEMENT? ALL THIS IS VERY
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DISQUIETING, FOR IMPORTANT MATTERS NOW
HAVE TO BE SETTLED . . .

AE: WHICH ARE, IN YOUR VIEW, THE PRIORITY ISSUES?

G: THE COMMUNITY'S ENLARGEMENT REQUIRES A CONSIDERABLE
IMAGINATIVE EFFORT. FOR THE COMMUNITY IS NOT READY,
PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO SPAIN. THEN THERE IS GATT,
AND THE STRUCTURAL SURPLUSES. FORTUNATELY, THE SITUATION
IS SOMEWHAT LESS SERIOUS IN THE DAIRY SECTOR. FOR SUGAR,
THERE IS THE QUESTION OF THE SYSTEM FOR THE ACP COUNTRIES.
BECAUSE OF THAT BURDEN, 2 MILLION TONS WILL HAVE TO BE
EXPORTED THIS YEAR. HOW SHOULD ONE DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM?
IT ALSO WAS INDISPENSABLE TO REGULATE ISOGLUCOSE, BUT
THERE WAS STILL A BIG BRAWL. ANOTHER MAJOR FILE: WINE.
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CERTAIN REGIONS ARE THREATENED BY BANKRUPTCY. FOR THE
(FRENCH) MIDI, PRESSURE IS NOW INTOLERABLE. TWO-THIRDS
OF THE HARVESTS ARE IN CELLARS. THE PROBLEM REQUIRES
SERIOUS THINKING. LAST YEAR'S COMPROMISE ON THE BASIC
WINE REGULATION IS NOT ENOUGH. IN FACT, IT IS ADEQUATE
ONLY FOR THIS YEAR. SHORT-TERM MEASURES, SUCH AS AID
TO PRIVATE STOCKPILING, CAN BE TAKEN. BUT THE PROBLEM
WILL NOT BE SETTLED AS LONG AS THE REGIONS CONCERNED
ARE BEING FLOODED WITH BLENDING WINE. WHAT CAN BE DONE,
UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WITHOUT HAMPERING TRADE? FOR,
IT IS A WELL-KNOWN FACT THAT THE ITALIANS ARE QUITE
READY, IF NECESSARY, TO RETALIATE BY RESTRICTING THEIR
IMPORTS OF DAIRY PRODUCTS AND OTHERS. MORE SOPHISTICATED
WAYS HAVE TO BE FOUND.

THE SYSTEM OF PRICES THAT TRIGGER AIDS TO STOCKPILING,
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REMOVALS AND DISTILLATION DOES NOT WORK IN FRANCE, IN
THE PRESENT SITUATION, BECAUSE PRICES IN THE MARKETING
CHAIN ARE TOO HIGH. I TOLD THE FRENCH LEADERS: "I
HAVE AN ARSENAL OF MEASURES; ARRANGE THINGS SO THAT

YOUR FIXED PRICES TRIGGER THESE OPERATIONS." I
THINK THEY UNDERSTOOD. FOR IT IS TRUE THAT REAL PRICES
MAKE SUPPORT MEASURES NECESSARY. THEY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED
BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF SEPTEMBER, INCLUDING A
DISTILLATION OPERATION THAT PROBABLY CAN BE UNDERTAKEN
BY THE COMMISSION WITHOUT PASSING THROUGH THE COUNCIL.

AE: DO YOU CONSIDER IT JUSTIFIED TO CRITICISE THE
SERVICES OF THE COMMISSION, PARTICULARLY THOSE
DEALING WITH AGRICULTURE, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN
ABLE TO PROPOSE A SINGLE CONCRETE MEASURE IN FAVOR
OF THE SOUTHERN FARM REGIONS OF THE COMMUNITY, EVEN
WHILE PROSPECTS-FOR COMMUNITY ENLARGEMENT ARE BECOMMING
MORE PROMISING?

G: IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT THE MEDITERRANEAN FILE HAS
NOT BEEN PREPARED. THERE IS NO TRADITION WHATSOEVER
IN THE COMMISSION OF CRYSTAL-BALLING THE FUTURE.
EVERYTHING HAD TO BE TACKLED FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
I HAVE MET WITH PEOPLE OF THE REGIONS CONCERNED. THE
FIRST PROPOSALS WILL COME IN THE FALL. THE DELAY IS
NOT A FATAL ONE. WE CAN MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME BY A
REDISTRIBUTION OF OUR ENERGIES. OUR PROPOSALS WILL
COMBINE A STRUCTURAL PLAN WITH CHANGES IN THE REGULA-
TIONS AFFECTING PRODUCTION IN THE SOUTH. WE HAVE TO
FIND IMPROVEMENTS FOR THEM, WITHOUT A SYSTEMATIC INTER-
VENTION SYSTEM SUCH AS THAT BENEFITTING MORE PRIVILEGED
CROPS.

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AE: ON THE DOMESTIC LEVEL, SOME THINK THAT YOU ARE GOING TO FIGHT PERMANENT INTERVENTION, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR BEEF. IS THAT TRUE?

G: INTERVENTION FOR BEEF MUST BE MAINTAINED. IT IS A BASIC ELEMENT, AND THE BEST ONE. FRANCE SHOULD NOT BE WORRYING ABOUT THIS. BUT I AM LOOKING FOR A MORE FLEXIBLE ARSENAL, AND BROADER POSSIBILITIES. THERE ARE PROBLEMS RELATED TO STOCKPILING: AID TO PRIVATE STOCK-PILING MUST BE DEVELOPED, THE MORE SO SINCE WE NOW HAVE MEAT FROM CATTLE SLAUGHTERED UNDER THE PREMIUM SYSTEM.

THE BREEDING OF BEEF CATTLE ALSO MUST BE DEVELOPED. TODAY IN THE EC, MEAT COMES MAINLY FROM DAIRY COWS. PREMIUMS SHOULD BE PAID FOR BREEDING BEEF CATTLE.

AE: DO YOU THINK THAT THE PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING THE DAIRY SECTOR--OR WHAT REMAINS OF IT--WILL HAVE A DETERMINING INFLUENCE ON THE ADJUSTMENT OF PRODUCTION TO DECLINING CONSUMPTION?

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G: THE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM HAS A MARKED INFLUENCE. BUT WE HAVE TO WAIT BEFORE PASSING JUDGEMENT. STOCKS ARE DECLINING. THE SITUATION NO LONGER IS CATASTROPHIC. IT NO LONGER IS A PRIORITY PROBLEM FOR ME.

THE ISSUE OF CORESPONSIBILITY, HOWEVER, REMAINS ON THE TABLE. IT SHOULD BE A SYSTEMATIC WEAPON FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARKET. I HAVE JUST AGREED WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INDUSTRY ON AN ARRANGEMENT. I HAVE GONE FAR OUT OF MY WAY IN ORDER TO REACH THAT ACCORD.

AE: ON THE FOREIGN SIDE, IS IT TRUE THAT THE COMMISSION IS CONTEMPLATING AN EXTENSION, IN 1978 AND 1979, OF THE PREFERENTIAL SYSTEM FOR NEW ZEALAND CHEESE? DO YOU THINK THAT THIS SYSTEM, TOGETHER WITH THE SYSTEM FOR BUTTER, IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE FINANCIAL CORESPONSIBILITY EXPECTED FROM COMMUNITY PRODUCERS?

G: THAT, TO ME, IS A MAJOR PROBLEM. "SOMEONE" HAS PUT THE ISSUE OF NEW ZEALAND CHEESE ON THE COMMISSION'S AGENDA. I HAVE REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. NEW ZEALAND, I REPEAT, IS A CONSIDERABLE PROBLEM FOR ME. ONE SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT EVERY KILO OF IMPORTED CHEESE REQUIRES AN EQUAL QUANTITY EXPORTED WITH SUBSIDY. AS TO NEW ZEALAND BUTTER, THE

COMMISSION PROPOSES A 10 PERCENT PRICE INCREASE. IT IS NOT MUCH, I ADMIT, BUT IT IS LOGICAL.

AE: DO YOU THINK THAT THE USA WITH WHICH YOU HAVE FREQUENT CONTACTS, REALLY IS READY TO MOVE SOMEWHAT IN GATT TOWARDS THE EEC BY RECOGNIZING THE SPECIFICITY OF THE FARM SECTOR?

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G: THE US NOW ACCEPTS THE CAP, AND IT HAS NOT REFUSED TO DISCUSS COMMODITY AGREEMENTS. THEY AGREE THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON AGRICULTURE IN GATT BE CONDUCTED "IN PARALLEL:" AGRICULTURE ON ONE SIDE, INDUSTRY ON THE OTHER. TWO STEPS FORWARD HAVE BEEN MADE WITH WASHINGTON: NO MORE TECHNOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS, AND THE POSSIBILITY TO START SERIOUS WORK. I AM NOT OPTIMISTIC, BUT IT IS NOW WORTHWHILE TO START WORKING. BEYOND THAT, THERE IS THE UNACCEPTABLE PROBLEM OF TRADE BETWEEN THE USA AND THE EEC, THE MORE SO SINCE THE COMMUNITY'S SHARE IN WORLD EXPORTS OF FARM PRODUCTS IS DECLINING.

THEREFORE, ONE OF MY AIMS IS THE CREATION OF AN EC TRADE POLICY. THIS, HOWEVER, CLASHES IN EUROPE WITH A PHILOSOPHICAL MALAISE, AND TRIGGERS DEFENSIVE REACTIONS TO THE SYSTEM OF SUBSIDIES. INSTEAD OF RATIONALLY DEVELOPING ITS EXPORTS, THE EEC, ON THE CONTRARY DOESN'T STOP REINFORCING ITS POSITION AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST IMPORTER IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR.

WE SHOULD BECOME MORE SYSTEMATIC IN OUR EXPORT POLICY. THE US HAS AGREED TO DISCUSS THAT FILE BECAUSE IT, TOO, IS MOVING TOWARD THE ORGANIZATION OF THEIR AGRICULTURAL MARKET. WHY, FOR INSTANCE, SHOULD THE US NOT SHARE PART OF THE RESPONSIBILITY OF NEW ZEALAND'S PROBLEM?

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TO RETURN TO THE BEGINNING OF OUR CONVERSATION, I.E.,
SALES OF BUTTER TO THE SOVIET UNION, ONE SHOULD NOT,
I THINK, EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM SUCH MARKETS THAT ARE
TOO SPOTTY. THERE ARE OTHER, ALMOST PERMANENT MARKETS.
IN THAT SENSE, WE SHOULD INSTITUTE LONG-TERM EXPORT
CONTRACTS; BUT SUCH CONTRACTS, THIS TIME, OUGHT TO BE
WELL PREPARED. END QUOTE. HINTON

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